

Deady Hall  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Lane County  
Oregon

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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DEADY HALL  
University of Oregon

Eugene, Lane County, Oregon

ADDRESS: Northwest portion of the University of Oregon campus  
OWNER: State of Oregon  
OCCUPANT: University of Oregon  
USE: Class Rooms

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Deady Hall was the first building on the University of Oregon campus. Begun in 1873 and completed in 1876, it was the focus of all university life until the building of Villard Hall in 1886. Its dignified, tall rectangular silhouette with end towers was a conspicuous feature of the comparatively barren early campus; and its simple mansarded Italianate style was a happy choice for an academic building, later echoed in the richer details of Villard Hall.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The University of Oregon was established by an Act of the State Legislature of October 19, 1872. The terms of the bill bound the organizing group, the Union University Association, to deed to the State by January 1, 1874, a completed and furnished building and grounds to the value of \$50,000. Failure to comply was to void the location. An Act passed the Legislature authorizing Lane County (where Eugene is located) to subscribe \$30,000; \$20,000 was to be raised by private subscription to bring the total to \$50,000. The

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County Court subscribed the \$30,000 - after much opposition; with other donations, the funds approached \$40,000. Drawings were obtained from W. W. Piper, which the State Board approved, and Piper's plans were adopted by the Union University Association for immediate construction. (W. W. Piper was born in New Hampshire about 1827; he came to Oregon in 1863 and was particularly active in Portland in the 1870s. He committed suicide in Wyoming in 1886.)

Contracts were let for the new building in the amount of about \$32,000.<sup>1</sup> Work progressed steadily until a special plea was presented to the County Court to urge reconsideration of the \$30,000 appropriation. The appropriation was rescinded on May 10, 1873. Although seriously hampered by this legal about-face, the organizing committee determined to appeal to the local citizens and farmers (especially through the latter's organization, the Patrons of Husbandry). Emergency work was ordered to finish the roof of the building for protection from winter rain, but it was apparent that completion was impossible by January 1, 1874. At the meeting of the Legislature in October, a photograph of the building as finished at that stage along with the architect's drawings were hung in the Secretary of State's Office. The request for an extension of time was granted to January 1, 1877. Work began again and the farmers responded generously - usually bringing produce which was converted into cash at the local markets by Mr. Hendricks, the Treasurer. By the fall of 1875, \$16,000 was still needed. At a county convention, \$6,000 was raised; and the Patrons of Husbandry agreed to supply the balance. The building was thus ready six months before the final date, just over three years after the ground breaking ceremony of May 7, 1873. There is some discrepancy in the dates given for the official acceptance of the building - either June 30 or July 26, 1876, when the Board of Land Commissioners, Governor Grover, State Secretary Chadwick and Treasurer Brown<sup>2</sup>, formally received the structure and land.

The University opened on October 16, 1876, with an enrollment of 155<sup>3</sup> - 80 in college and 75 in preparatory. One floor only was ready for classes - the first or main floor. The University faculty classrooms were on the north side: President Johnson in the northwest corner, then Professor Bailey and finally Professor Condon in the northeast corner. The Preparatory Department occupied the two rooms across the hall, with Mrs. Spiller and Miss Stone in charge. By the time of the second year, Johnson and Professors Bailey and Condon had moved to the second floor. The auditorium, on the third floor,

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was ready for the first commencement in June of 1878 when the first five graduates left the University.

The architect, Piper, waited two years for his fee from the Union University Association. He then sued and obtained a judgment for \$927.30 from the Lane County Circuit Court. Final payment was somewhat delayed; but in the meantime, Piper donated \$50.00 to the University fund - "apparently charging part of his design fee in the interests of higher education". (Nelson, "Architects of Oregon", p. 10) The building was in constant financial crisis, even after its completion. Some local persons brought forth claims for unpaid bills in the early 1880s and the University again almost foundered. The savior at this point was Henry Villard. "Unpaid pledges and disappointments of various kinds had accumulated into a debt of \$7,000. The creditors were weary of waiting and finally a writ of execution was in the hands of the sheriff, against the grounds and building. At a meeting of citizens, \$3400 was subscribed. Members of the faculty set down a large proportion of their salaries for the next year. Mr. Henry Villard (of the Northern Pacific Railroad) saw in the Oregonian a notice that the State University was to be sold for debt...His visit (to Eugene) resulted in his gift of \$7,000 to pay off all indebtedness. (Approximately. During 1881-82, it was \$11,010 altogether in varying amounts for different purposes, in part only for settlement of debt; see Sheldon, History of the University of Oregon). In May, 1883, Mr. Villard offered to donate \$50,000 as a permanent endowment fund." (Luella Carson, p. 9)

The first building at the University had no official name until March 30, 1893, when a Board of Regents meeting made the following resolution: "Whereas one of the buildings of the University of Oregon has no distinctive name by which it can be conveniently designated, therefore be it resolved that the original University building be designated 'Deady Hall' and be henceforth known by that name in honor of the late Honorable Matthew P. Deady." (It is interesting that Deady had been opposed to the establishment of the University in 1857 - as he was "a Southern party wheelhorse, much in favor of the parochial school system" - Story of Eugene, p. 133. "When, in later years, he saw the tremendous value of the State University, he was even more valiant in his strong and sympathetic support." Deady was a judge, and became first president of the Board of Regents and a member of the Oregon Supreme Court Bench.)

A further omission was discovered in 1926, at the time of the planning of the semi-centennial; Deady Hall had never been dedicated. The committee in charge of the semi-centennial, scheduled for October 15-23 of that year, arranged a suitable ceremony and memorial tablet. The principal address was given by Dr. Luella Clay Carson, former Professor of Rhetoric and later Dean of Women and then President of Mills College, Oakland, California.

#### NOTES (Historical Information)

1. Contract for brick was let on May 13, 1873 and a contract for the erection of the building came on May 25th. The principal difficulties encountered were in the sinking of a well. (Later, a big iron windmill under the Condon Oaks pumped water to a "queer little tank in the attic".) Sheldon, History of the University of Oregon, pp. 30-42, has a more complete discussion of the early history and personalities involved - notably Judge J. J. Walton, etc.
2. "Construction of the first campus building progressed slowly through 1875 and 1876 when the building, still unfinished in some details, was accepted by the State. According to the 1876 Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, "The plan of the building originated with the Board of Directors of the Union University Association, which plan was submitted to his excellency, L. F. Grover, Governor, and by him changed in some few particulars; then placed in the hands of an architect - W. W. Piper - who amplified the plan, giving the building many of its present architectural beauties." See Nelson, Architects of Oregon, p. 10.
3. The Story of Eugene, p. 138, notes that there were 177 students whose names were inscribed on a memorial glass over the west door. The Illustrated History of Lane County, p. 343, says: "The University is approached from the west end of the building and a broad flight of steps leads into the main hall. Over the door is a memorial glass transome...When money could not be obtained to purchase (window) glass for the building, the children, even, gave their pocket money for the noble purpose of inclosing the structure. In acknowledgment the directors decided to put, over the front door of the building, this glass with the names of

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the donors inscribed thereon - a most graceful and feeling act." Sheldon's History of the University of Oregon, p. 33, notes that the Eugene Guard for March 20, 1875 indicated that recognition be given the children "by an inscription over the two main doors"; it adds: "Students were slow in arriving, but at the end of the term there were 177 in attendance, of whom 80 were classified as being of college grade and 97 in the preparatory department." It seems likely, then, that there were 155 students at the beginning of the term and 177 at the end of the first term.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL AND SOURCES

##### Addresses:

Carson, Dr. Luella Clay, Address of dedication, 1926. Reprinted in its entirety in Old Oregon, December, 1926, Vol. IX, No. 3, p. 7ff.

##### Books:

Illustrated History of Lane County, Oregon, Portland, A. G. Walling Company, 1884, p. 343.  
Moore, Lucia; McCornack, Nina W.: McCready, Gladys W., The Story of Eugene, New York, Stratford House, 1949, pp. 133, 136, 138 and 141.  
Sheldon, Henry D., History of the University of Oregon, Portland, Binford and Mort, 1940, pp. 30-42.

##### Newspapers:

See clipping file at Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library; many are undated and it is difficult to correctly connect names and places with others.  
Abstract (Portland), July 2, 1914.  
Independent Tribune (Pendleton), August 19, 1914.  
Oregonian (Portland), April 11, 1926: contains a general account of the building's history and later use.  
Sun (Walloway), July 23, 1914.

##### Periodicals:

Nelson, Lee H. "Architects of Oregon: Piper and Williams",

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The Call Number, Spring, 1959 (Vol. 20, No. 2), Eugene,  
Library of University of Oregon, pp. 9-10.

#### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The three story rectangular building (with end towers) approximately 113' x 58' (122' overall length), oriented with its shorter ends at east and west and the "principal" original entrance at the west (although in fact the two entrances, west and east, are identical), was a dominating feature of the barren ground east of Eugene. Trees were planted early (such as the famous Condon oaks) but the site was essentially free of major foliage for at least ten or fifteen years. The Illustrated History of Lane County, p. 343, provides an accurate contemporary description which can not be bettered, except for its rather vague stylistic analysis: "The University of the State of Oregon is located on a gently rising knoll about 25 feet in height and nearly a mile from the business portion of Eugene City. It is picturesquely situated and affords a fine view of any portion of the grounds. Architecturally described, the building is in the form of a parallelogram designed in the style of the renaissance, with a mansard roof, the whole producing a regular and harmonious exterior, which is ornate without a trace of the ostentatious, and substantial without being unwieldy. The edifice fronts east and west, its extreme length being, exclusive of the buttresses for the front step, one hundred and twelve feet seven inches, and the width fifty-seven feet ten inches. The altitude from the ground to the top of the roof is fifty-six feet, and to the top of the towers seventy-four feet, while the height of the basement is ten feet. On the south side are fitted up three rooms for the use of the janitor (that is, in the basement), and a portion of the remaining space converted to a chemical laboratory. The first story, in height sixteen feet, is divided into six rooms with a hall one hundred feet long in the clear, and eight feet wide, running through the center; on the north side are four rooms, each eighteen by twenty feet; the south side is divided into two rooms, both thirty-eight by twenty feet, and used for the preparatory and primary departments. The second story, in height sixteen feet, is equally divided into four rooms, each thirty-eight by twenty-five feet, which are used for recitations. The third story, height eighteen feet, is entirely taken up by the chapel, which is seventy-eight by fifty feet. On the north side is built a stage, thirty-nine feet long and twelve feet wide, raised two feet from the floor.

There are four flights of winding stairs, one in each corner, commencing on the first story and terminating on the third. On the top of the building there are two towers, one at either end, which are eighteen feet in height. The University is approached from the west end of the building and a broad flight of steps leads into the main hall. Over the door is a memorial glass transome, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The style is a simplified Italianate with mansard-roofed towers and a mansarded main roof. This mixing of features from the earlier Italianate (tall narrow windows with what the 19th century called "Florentine" tracery; flattened pediments on modified consoles; the strong, classicizing dentil course) and Second Empire mansard roofs is not unusual in western architecture of the 1870's. The Governor's Mansion in Sacramento, California, (1877) is contemporary and shows some of the same mixing of details. Structurally, Deady Hall is built of brick - with wooden trim. A thin layer of plaster or mastic - it may be simple successive thicknesses of paint - sheathes the brick exteriorly, although the pattern of bricks is still perceptible. Viewed as a whole, the building is treated as if it had a row of engaged pilasters along the sides on the two main stories (first and second), under the roof story. These are actually not pilasters but strip sections of brick on the same plane as the frieze and base strips of each story - with windows set back on a less salient plane of wall. Five such strips articulate each side (north and south) on the first and second stories; on the east and west, these same strip articulative elements are used to animate the sections around each tower. The windows, arranged in pairs in four "bays" on each long side and grouped singly on the shorter east and west sides, flanking the towers, are headed with semi-circular arches and given discreet variety with triple moldings which encircle the windows along the sides and into the arched headings. A strong keystone punctuates the top of the arch in each window. Strip moldings are used to divide the basement and first story visually; in the first and second, there is a simplified frieze with crisp dentil course. Above the second story frieze is a deep wooden cornice with modified modillions (that is, they are not specifically "correct" in the Classical sense, but follow the usual practice of architecture in the later 60s and especially in the 70s to modify the classicizing features of the Italianate with Eastlake-inspired patterns of incised ornament, and extra bracket supports).

As the principal design element of the exterior, the windows have more ornamental flavor than any other part of the building. The



windows on the long sides and the single windows flanking the towers on the shorter sides (east and west) are simple double-hung types with four panes of glass to each section, and with narrow wooden muntins. The windows at the roof level are the same shape (semi-circular arched heads), but are framed in tall wooden dormers with flattened pediments and modified consoles beneath the pediments. In the deeply concave mansard over each of the towers, there is a semi-circular arched window in each face of the mansard (cast iron cresting is still in situ atop each tower mansard). The principal entrances - east and west - are reached by a flight of steps, which lead to a door framed in paneled brick pilasters "supporting" a strong wooden cornice on consoles. A wooden keystone heads the door arch. Above this door, east and west, is a window (in the second story) with wooden tracery under the arch - following the type of the Florentine palace of the earlier 15th century. At the roof level, the window of the tower section is semi-circular arched and is flanked by tall, narrow windows of the same type. Four chimneys line the roof, north and south - no longer necessary. The wooden trim is now painted cream-color, and the roof (originally of wooden shingles) has been replaced with gray-green asphalt shingling.

In 1914, radical interior changes were effected. Various newspapers of the period report the renovations and remodeling. "Deady Hall... will be ready for occupancy by September 15. This summer the oldest building...has undergone a complete change. The entire inside of the structure has been torn out. New rooms have been fashioned, the steep winding stairs are giving way to modern stairs, a fact to make many undergraduates rejoice." (Independent Tribune of Pendleton for August 19, 1914). "The building will...be devoted hereafter entirely to the teaching of the sciences. The Departments of French and Spanish, English Literature, History, Latin and German will be given quarters in some of the new structures. (Abstract of Portland, July 2, 1914) The building "is being changed from a four story structure (three stories with basement) to what amounts to virtually seven stories. This is accomplished by means of mezzanine floors, galleries and balconies, which cut the old time lofty chambers horizontally in two. (Sun of Wallaway for July 23, 1914). It is, of course, ironic that the papers report these changes at a time when the approach of World War I was to affect the student body so deeply - more than the removal of staircases. The actual interior effect today is not easily described as cutting the "old time lofty chambers horizontally in two". On the main floor, the original height is retained in the rooms, but an extra space is created in the mezzanine floor of the stair hall and the space over the central hall. Above, in the second and third floors

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of the original building, there is a complete change of two main floors to four. One interesting fact that emerged was "that the lands surrounding the hall were wheat fields is attested to whenever any remodeling is done on the first floor...the floors were found to be double and inlaid with dirt in order to deaden sounds. The dirt contained quantities of wheat and stubble." (Morning Register of Eugene, April 14, 1926) The building is currently occupied by the Mathematics Department (1963) and minor changes of lighting and sound-proofing and other practical improvements have continued to be made since 1914. The basic structural reorganization has not been substantially altered since that date.

The dimensions given for this building vary with different authorities. The most accurate are those of the Illustrated History of Lane County, cited earlier in this section. Plans of the building exist in the Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library, and elsewhere in official University building archives.

NOTE (Architectural Information)

1. A more recent general characterization is given by Marion Dean Ross in "Architecture in Oregon: 1845-1895", p. 39: "Piper was also the architect for Deady Hall...Here he was undoubtedly more financially limited than in the Marion County Courthouse (in Salem). The effect is less richly plastic, there is less trim of any kind, and no lush iron work, but with the simple materials of brick and wood he manages to make a dignified and impressive building. Some of the simplifications add to the forthright interest of the roof and cornice forms. The bold profiles and multiple angles of the cornice are especially effective when seen in sharp perspective." (The building is heavily mantled in ivy at present - 1963, which somewhat obscures details.)

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